

BOEM ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: Planned New Study

Region: Pacific

Planning Area(s): Southern California, Central California

Title: Community Perspectives, Recreation, and Tourism Baseline for Offshore Wind Development

BOEM Information Need(s) to be Addressed: In January 2016, BOEM received an unsolicited commercial lease request for a floating wind farm offshore Morro Bay, California. The request presents a need to gather socioeconomic data before the proposed project is installed (if the lease is granted and subsequent plans approved), particularly data on community perspectives, recreation, and tourism. These data will provide a baseline for future comparison of post-installation data in order to assess how community perspectives on offshore wind and recreation and tourism behavior change as a result of offshore wind development. Examples of changes in perspectives and behavior after a utility-scale offshore renewable energy installation are lacking in the U.S. because of the lack of such installations. Such information will be valuable for verifying the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for the proposed project, adaptive management, and future planning and analyses for West Coast offshore renewable energy projects. This information can also contribute to West Coast marine spatial planning efforts and assist coastal planners in California.

Estimated BOEM Cost: \$250,000

Period of Performance: FY 2017-2020

Conducting Organization: TBD

Principal Investigator: TBD

BOEM Contact: [Sara Gultinan](#)

Description:

Background: A 2010 BOEM study suggests that potential impacts to recreation and tourism are largely dependent on the public's perception of wind facilities (ICF 2012). Studies from Europe indicate that public opinion becomes more positive once the offshore wind facility is operational (Cronin et al. 2015). Site-specific, project-specific data both before and after project installation are needed in order to better understand actual project impacts on public opinion and potentially affected activities such as recreation and tourism. To facilitate a before-and-after comparison, this study will provide baseline information on community perspectives on offshore wind development in California and recreation and tourism activity.

Some of the areas and groups of interest for these perspectives, recreation, and tourism data are the onshore beaches, parks, and public areas adjacent to the proposed lease area and staging locations, popular waterfront areas, sportfishing operations, and other charter boat operations (such as wildlife viewing charters) in the vicinity. This study could be modeled in part upon the ongoing BOEM study, *Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy Development: Public Attitudes, Values, and Implications for Recreation and Tourism* (BOEM 2014).

BOEM performed a number of socioeconomic studies in the areas of interest in the 1980s to early 2000s, but these studies were intended to inform BOEM's Oil & Gas Program. The most recent report is a from 2002 BOEM study that includes a social, economic, and historic characterization of three counties in Southern California, with a focus on the coastal California oil industry.

Objectives: Questions to be answered by this study are:

- What are the preferences (such as amenities and characteristics of certain coastal areas) that visitors consider to be of value when making their recreation/tourism choices?
- What are local community (residents, recreators, and tourists) perspectives about offshore wind development before the project is installed?
- What is the nature and frequency of recreation, tourism, and visitation rates in the proposed project area before the project is installed?

Methods:

The objectives of the study can be accomplished by primary data collection in the proposed project area. Suggested methods include:

- Synthesize existing information regarding community perceptions of offshore wind development, recreation and tourism activities that may be impacted by offshore wind development, and impacting factors (e.g., visual impacts from development on beach visitation, recreational fishing impacts from creation of a Fishing Aggregation Device).
- Determine the best sampling method to gather baseline perceptions, recreation, and tourism data (e.g., guided discussions, surveys with local communities/onshore public area visitors/charter boat clients and operators, observation of recreation and tourism activity) and design appropriate methodology to achieve project objectives.
- Encourage the use of community-based research methods and citizen science tools to enable the potentially impacted communities to be involved in the research and to increase the relevance and usability of the data.
- Design and implement an Office of Management and Budget-approved survey.
- Synthesize findings in a study report and provide geospatial data in a GIS.

Current Status: Not yet awarded

Final Report Due: TBD

Publications Completed: None

Affiliated WWW Sites: None

Revised Date: July 27, 2016

References:

- BOEM. October 31, 2014. *Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy Development: Public Attitudes, Values, and Implications for Recreation and Tourism*. Retrieved January 21, 2015 from Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Renewable Energy Research Ongoing Studies: http://www.boem.gov/uploadedFiles/BOEM/Environmental_Stewardship/Environmental_Studies/Renewable_Energy/AT%2012-04%20Public%20Attitudes_bck.pdf.
- Cronin, T., Ram, B., Gannon, J., Clausen, N-E., Thuesen, C., Maslesa, E., Gerald, J., 2015. Public acceptance of wind farm development: Developer practices and review of scientific literature . DTU Wind Energy E; No. 0051.
- ICF, 2012. Atlantic Regional Wind Energy Development: Recreation and Tourism Economic Baseline Development. BOEM. OCS 2012-085.